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WHY
Freight is Lost or Damaged

A. C. KENLY

Printed under the Auspices
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Why Freight is Lost or Damaged

A. C. KENLY

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WHY FREIGHT IS LOST OR DAMAGED

SHIPPERS and consignees blame the carrier when a shipment of freight fails to reach destination or is delivered to consignee in a damaged condition. But a small number stop to think it is more their fault than the carrier's. In the beginning, the fundamental rule of carriers in accepting merchandise was the requiring of each package to be plainly marked, showing full name of consignee and destination. From a willingness to oblige patrons this vital requirement has been so far "side-tracked," so to speak, that it is not unusual for boxes, bales, bundles and pieces to be accepted without any marks. Coupled to the disappearance of full marks came the gradual decline in the strength of packages in which goods are shipped. Boxes and sacks are made of thinner material, crates are substituted for boxes, and sacks are now being used by some shippers for articles which should not be shipped in them.

To insure the prompt and safe delivery of goods, it is necessary for the shipper to plainly mark each and every package, bundle or piece of an less carload shipment, showing this information:

Consignee's name in full.
Bill of lading destination in full.
State in which destination is located.
If more than one station in same State of same name, full name of County must be shown.
All previous shipping marks must be obliterated.

The name of consignee and destination must be legibly written or stencilled, and as far away from any other writing or marks as possible. It is a great help to all when shipper's name and location are also shown, with the word "FROM" preceding them.

Every package, bundle or piece offered for shipment should be presented to carrier in condition to stand the wear and tear of modern transportation, the shipper bearing in mind the increased size of box cars, fast schedules and the stopping of trains by the application of air.

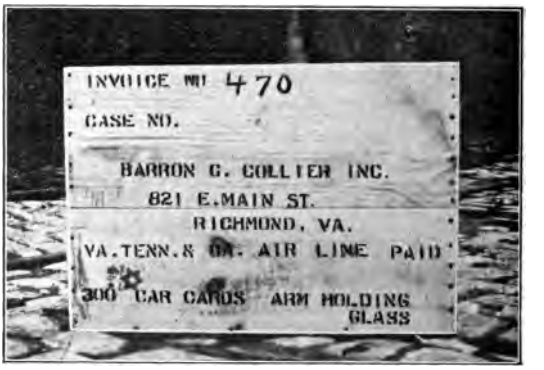
I will illustrate the difference between the proper and improper marking and packing of freight. These photographs were taken at various forwarding and delivering warehouses. They are not isolated cases, it being often a question as to which article to photograph, and their counterparts are familiar sights at all such stations throughout the country.

313620

THE MARKING OF FREIGHT

CONTRAST, please, the marking of these two cases. The first is fully marked in so far as name of consignee and destination are concerned, and you will note even the street address is shown; yet it is more or less confused by being surrounded by a multiplicity of other information.

This may cause the loss of the package or a delay in delivery.



NUMBER ONE

When shipped, the second case bore nothing but the name of consignee and destination on the side reserved for shipping marks. The figures on the left were placed thereon by destination agent and represent car number in which received and date thereof.

There will not be any delay in the movement of this shipment.

NUMBER TWO

In my estimation the second case would be ideally marked if the shipper's name and address were shown in the upper left-hand corner, with date of shipment and case number. For example:

From
SMITH & JONES,
Chicago, Ill.
August 22, 1908.
Case No. 317.

The presence of the shipper's name is of assistance as a means of identification of a package, and is of great value when it is refused or unclaimed by consignee, as in all such instances the shipper can be promptly notified, and if date of shipment and case number are shown, he can also be given this information, which will enable him to at once locate the particular shipment involved.

Also when shipments are made at regular intervals, or short periods, the presence of the date of shipment and the case number prevent any uncertainty as to which lot one or more packages belong in case they check short and reach destination on the same date or subsequently to a later shipment.

NUMBER THREE

Note the different manner in which the two barrels shown in number three are marked.

As both were shipped by same party in same car the marking is the result of indifference. The marks on the barrel on the right were placed there

because the head happened to be up; and those on the bottom of the other were stencilled thereon, because that end was up when the shipping clerk did the marking.

Note the confusion of marks and brand on the right-hand barrel as against the clearness of the marks on the other. The left-hand barrel would be well marked if consignee's name was shown in full.

Number four is an example of double marks on a package, and it is a very common practice of jobbers and distributers to ship packages so marked.

NUMBER FOUR

If there is one rule which every agent knows and obeys, it is to forward at once to correct destination any piece of freight unloaded through error at his station.

Now, suppose one or both of these cases had been unloaded at some other point than proper destination, the agent would have to use his best common sense and judgment; but his decision in the majority of cases would be more or less guess-work, and nature, for some divine but unfathomable reason, usually sees we guess wrong.

When the agent guesses wrong there is more or less delay in arrival of goods at destination, resulting in complaint, and possibly the consignee refuses to accept the shipment, which means trouble and correspondence and probably a claim; all of which would have been avoided if party reshipping the cases had erased the old shipping marks.

Number five is a bale of mattresses, about six by four feet in size.

It is endeavoring to reach its destination through the exertions of a small paper tag, about the size of this photograph. I say "exertions" of a small paper tag advisedly, as it is an exertion and constant struggle for the

little tag not to lose its "grip," for it realizes if it does the great big bale will be left utterly helpless, to drift hopelessly to an unmarked grave, at a sale of unclaimed and refused freight; for the little paper tag bears the name of consignee and where he is located.

It does seem absurd, doesn't it, that a shipper having such a wide expanse of surface on which to spread the name of consignee and destination, would seemingly prefer to use a paper tag, which is necessarily subjected to all sorts of chances of being torn off in part or whole through handling, stowing, and the rubbing and chafing which packages must undergo, no matter how carefully stowed, whilst train is in motion.

NUMBER FIVE

Tags should never be used when it is possible to show shipping marks on the article itself. When they are used they should be made preferably of linen or strong manilla paper, with a reinforced eyehole, and attached to the article by a wire string, or sewed to it, or securely tacked—one tack in each corner and the fifth in the middle, using broad-head tacks to prevent tearing. Linen tags should always be used on shipments of iron articles, especially small pipe and castings, which are too small to be marked with marking brush or stencil. I have seen shipments of iron bars one inch in diameter plainly stencilled.

Number six represents a bale of hay which is evidently traveling on its shape, as there are no shipping marks attached to it in any manner.

Now, there are various kinds and qualities of hay. The average shipper ships any kind or quality as a "bale of hay," and it is so written on the way-bill.

When a local freight train rolls up to a station and has been losing time, as is its usual habit, the conductor, hurriedly glancing over the way-

bills, sees there is a bale to be unloaded for John Smith. The car door is opened and the conductor sees three bales, and as all bales look alike to him he unloads the handiest one and away he goes. A little further down the road he unloads a second bale for Bill Jones, and before reaching the end of the run he unloads the last for Tom Johnson.

NUMBER SIX

Now, in this special episode John Smith ordered a bale of number one timothy, and when he received a bale of number two, he was mad clear through, thought the shipper was trying to cheat him, and so wrote him. Bill Jones had ordered a bale of number two timothy and got the bale of clover that Tom Johnson ordered, and when Tom got the bale of timothy that John Smith ordered both were hotter than hornets and took to letter writing; and before the affair was over everybody, including the claim agent, had hay fever—all arising from the lack of properly marked bales.

Some shippers of hay slip the tag bearing the marks under one of the wire bands. It should also be tied to it, as there is always the chance of its working out, thus leaving the bale without marks.

THE PACKING OF FREIGHT

Freight delivered to carriers for transportation can be divided into three general classes:

1st—When an article is not protected in any manner.
2nd—When an article is in a sack.
3rd—When an article is strapped, crated or entirely boxed.

We will consider them separately.

UNPROTECTED ARTICLES

Photograph number seven represents the ordinary method of shipping small orders of stoves.

Do you wonder carriers pay innumerable claims for damage to them? Particularly when you remember how easily cast iron is cracked or broken by a blow or falling article.

Depict this defenceless "critter," in a box car of a hundred thousand pounds capacity, surrounded and overtopped, for nothing can be piled on it, by a miscellaneous assortment of articles, ranging from an inoffensive sack of flour to a box of hardware stowed high above it, which may fall on it with deadly effect at any minute, being thrown from its apparently secure position by the swing of the fast-moving train around a sharp curve or the sudden application of the air brakes.

NUMBER SEVEN

NUMBER EIGHT

Number eight is another source of petty claims. Broken chairs. The country is full of them. Those of value should always be crated. The cheaper chairs should be shipped knocked down in full or part, and set up at destination.

As a general proposition, an unprotected article should not be so shipped unless of a nature to withstand the ordinary wear and tear of transportation.

ARTICLES IN SACKS

Numbers nine and ten represent shipments of corn meal and flour in sacks. Note the torn and soiled sacks.

NUMBER NINE

I presume the largest number of claims received by carrier for damage is against flour and meal in sacks, chiefly owing to a majority of shippers using sacks of extremely poor quality.

I have seen meal (ninety-six lbs. to the sack) packed in such weak sacks they would break in half when lifted. I have seen flour (in the smaller size sacks) packed in such flimsy sacks when piled five high in a car the bottom layer would burst under the pressure of the other four.

NUMBER TEN

Number eleven is a shipment of flour in small sacks protected by burlap covering, which means the customer will get his flour in clean, saleable condition.

NUMBER ELEVEN

It is only a question of time that the shipper who burlaps his shipments is going to get the trade of the fellow who does not.

NUMBER TWELVE

Number twelve shows a very poor quality of sack used by many for grain. The meshes are so wide that the corn oozes out through them, and when this is supplemented, as in a majority of cases, by careless sewing of the mouth with wide stitches, permitting a constant dripping of grains of corn as shown in the photograph, it means more or less loss by the time shipment reaches destination.

The poor quality and wide mesh offers but faint resistance to the ordinary wear and tear incident to handling in transit, and causes many claims of varying amounts.

Many shippers use a sack so short that the mouth cannot be sewed tight without stretching or tearing the meshes, thus causing loss.

In my judgment it is poor policy for a shipper to use such sacks, and equally as poor policy for carriers to accept them.

Sacks should always be long enough to permit doubling the mouth, and should be sewed with inch stitches.

Number thirteen is a sack of meat. When meat is so shipped the marks should be on a linen tag, as in hot weather the grease running from

NUMBER THIRTEEN

the meat will obliterate the marks if on the sack. This is why so many sacks of meat are mixed in delivery or lost like hay and other unmarked articles. In this instance the shipper has attached a tag as an additional precaution.

As a general proposition, I think it is a bad practice for carriers to accept meat in sacks, as it is susceptible to robbery by the hungry.

Articles Strapped, Crated or Boxed

Number fourteen is a china closet which had a fine round glass front when it started from the factory. When this photograph was taken half way to destination most of the glass had disappeared. Are you surprised?

NUMBER FOURTEEN

Some carrier will pay for the glass broken, and ought to, for accepting the closet packed as it was offered.

You would think the shipper would desire the article to reach his customer intact, but apparently he is satisfied to take chances, as he knows that some carrier will pay for any breakage, and it is cheaper to crate than to wholly box.

NUMBER FIFTEEN

Number fifteen is several sashes crated. The slats are thin material with one nail driven in the end. You will note one end of one slat has broken loose, exposing additional glass to any protruding or falling article.

An article partly made of glass should always have the glass portion solidly covered.

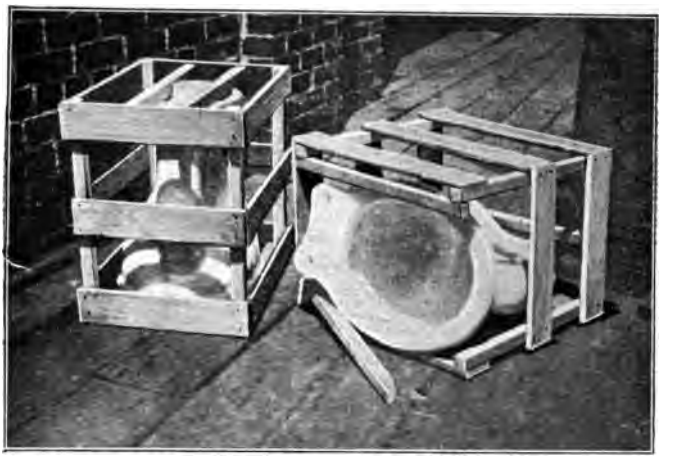
Number sixteen is another example of cheap crating. The material is so thin and the nails so small that it can stand but little of the usage that freight must necessarily be subjected to in the hurried handling and stowing incident to getting trains out on schedules to satisfy the demands for quick service.

NUMBER SIXTEEN

Here is another way of shipping stoves. Just look at these miserable apologies for crates. It would be as well, if not better, for all concerned, if they were not crated at all.

NUMBER SEVENTEEN

Numbers eighteen and nineteen are examples of improper and proper crating.

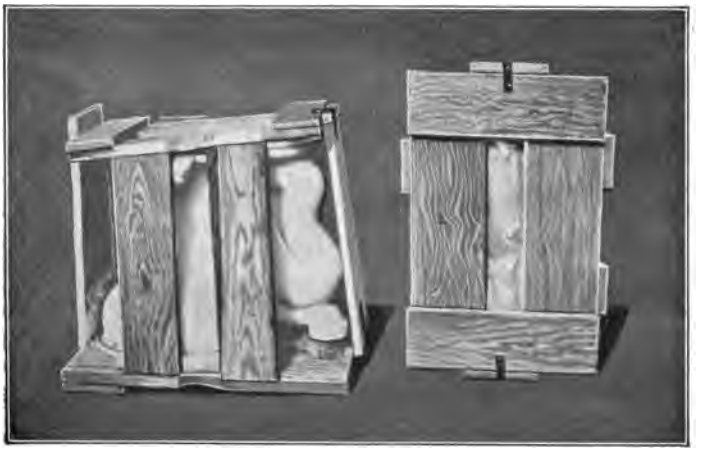


NUMBER EIGHTEEN

Number nineteen shows it is entirely possible to properly crate an article.

Note the thickness of the wood.

The crating is further secured by iron straps. I warrant this firm or its customer do not make many claims for broken articles.

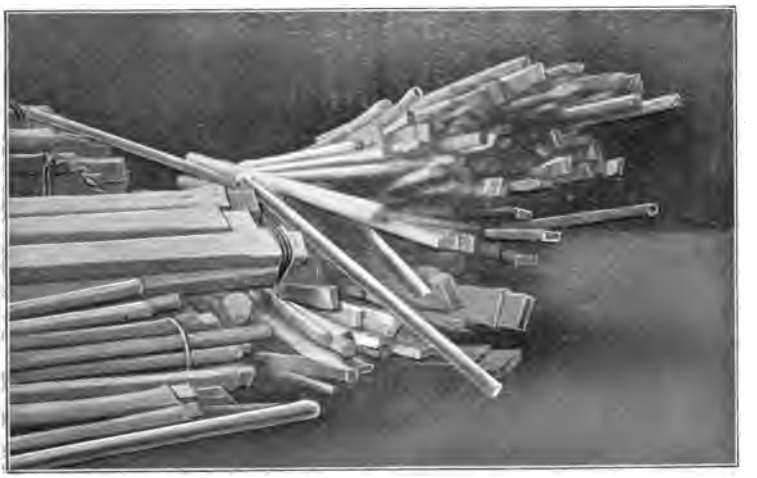


NUMBER NINETEEN

Numbers twenty, twenty-one and twenty-two are three examples of the improper and proper packing of the articles shown, and will apply to all similar articles.

NUMBER TWENTY

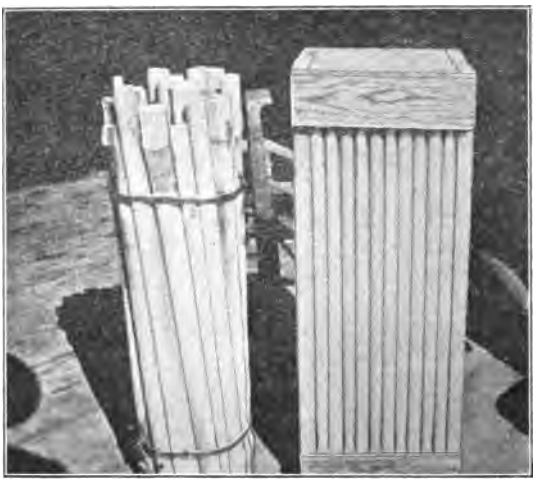
Number twenty shows the two bundles tied with a string ready to begin their journey. If you examine closely the smaller bundle you will note one spoke has already worked out from under the string.



NUMBER TWENTY-ONE

Number twenty-one shows the condition in which a great many bundles reach destination. There are more or less spokes lost and necessarily more or less claims.

It is refreshing to turn to number twenty-two and see a shipment of this class properly crated. Contrast it with the cheap and unbusiness-like bundle beside it.



NUMBER TWENTY-TWO

Number twenty-three represents two cans of lard.

Note how durably the can to the left is crated in contrast to the other.

These cans weigh from fifty to sixty pounds, and the crating on the one on the right is too weak to properly protect it, with the result the crate

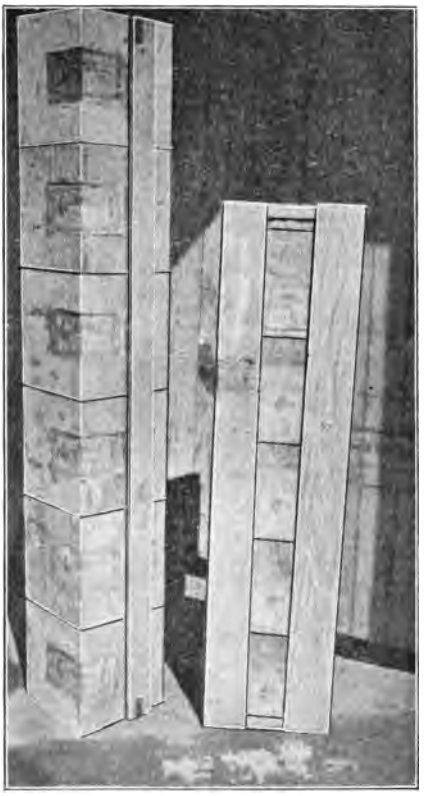
NUMBER TWENTY-THREE

is frequently broken, the can is exposed to the shifting of the freight in the car and is possibly dented, and in many cases the top is forced off, the lard is either soiled or a certain amount of it runs out in hot weather or falls out in cold.

Number twenty-four shows the proper and improper strapping and crating of caddies of tobacco.

Note how securely the one on the right is crated, whereas the shipment to the left has but one narrow strap nailed along the side. The sudden stopping of a fast moving train would be sufficient to snap off the top caddy and the one next to it. And how easy for a "tobacco chewer" to break off a caddy and make off with it under favorable conditions.

Carriers pay for a great many short caddies of tobacco. It is foolish for them not to demand their proper crating.



NUMBER TWENTY-FOUR

NUMBER TWENTY-FIVE

Number twenty-five represents a shipment of smoked herrings, and is near the limit. The wood is about as thick as cardboard and the various boxes are tied together with a string.

Do you blame the hungry train-hand or any one else for helping himself when the invitation is so palpable?

Both shipper and carrier should blush—the one for accepting and the other for offering such shipments.

Number twenty-six is part of a shipment of 25 small boxes shipped loose, each marked with full name of consignee and destination. The boxes are about 11 by 5 by 3 inches, and weigh five pounds.

NUMBER TWENTY-SIX

NUMBER TWENTY-SEVEN

Numbers twenty-seven and twenty-eight are examples of small boxes crated and strapped. Now, if the shipper of boxes shown in twenty-six had

crated or strapped them, making two packages, 13 boxes in one and 12 in the other, look what he would have saved.

1st—The marking of twenty-three boxes.

2nd—The reduction of chances of shortage or damage from 25 times to 2

NUMBER TWENTY-EIGHT

NUMBER TWENTY-NINE

Here is another example of poor crating, and is a very common package, being a five gallon bottle of lithia water. The neck of the bottle should be protected. You can readily see the danger of breakage in the present condition.

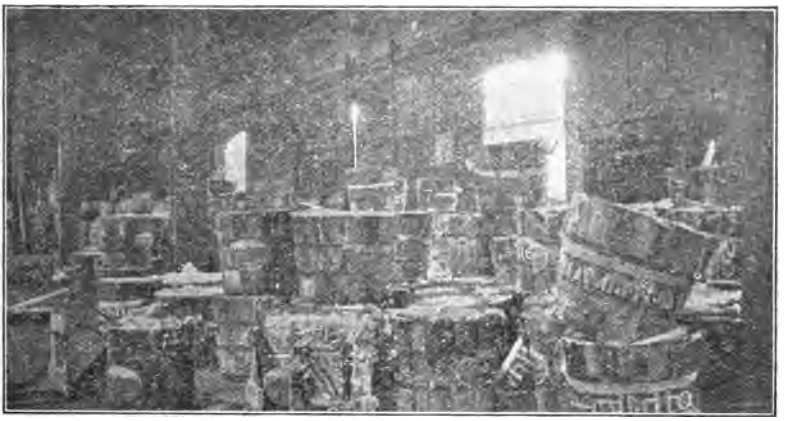
Number thirty reproduces buckets of lard in a package used by all shippers of lard, butter and similar compounds. Candy and other articles are also shipped in a like package. The top usually consists of one to three pieces nailed to the staves, and sometimes, when it is of one solid piece, it is only fastened down by a wire clamp. You will note the parts of two tops have been broken off, exposing the lard to loss or soiling. You will further note one side of a handle on the top bucket has been broken loose. The handles are attached by small wire staples, often carelessly and half fastened. I have seen handles pulled off when a stevedore was in the act of lifting a bucket to stow

NUMBER THIRTY

it in a car, resulting in the bucket falling to the floor, the top bursting off and contents tumbling out. These buckets weigh from fifty to sixty lbs., and the tops should not only be nailed, but additionally secured by metal straps, as shown in number thirty-one. You will note the top of the middle bucket in this photograph has worked loose, although nailed, and is held by the straps.

NUMBER THIRTY-ONE

Number thirty-two is a view of a carload of lard after a wreck. A close inspection will show the buckets proper are sound, and if the tops had been additionally protected by metal straps, there would have been but little if any loss.



NUMBER THIRTY-TWO

Number thirty-three is a photograph of a bucket of lard shipped in the usual way, and beside it is a small package showing another mode of fastening a top with metal straps or bands in addition to nailing it. These bands

NUMBER THIRTY-THREE

are nailed to the side of the box instead of being attached to the hoop, as in number twenty-eight. I prefer the latter method, as the hoop is also held in place by the band or straps.

NUMBER THIRTY-FOUR

Number thirty-four is a shipment of cheese in the poor, weak, cheap package used for this purpose.

Carriers pay many claims for accepting it in this shape. The package is highly susceptible to breakage. Often the top is not even fastened on, so it is a frequent occurrence for a cheese to reach consignee with one to two pounds cut out to feed the hungry en route.

Carriers should require a shipment of one or more boxes to be strapped or crated. An ideal way to ship more than one box would be to have them wired together, as are half-buckets, shown in number thirty-one. In this case the four strands of strong wire are fastened to each bucket by a wire staple and the ends twisted tightly together over the center of the top bucket, thus making one strong, safe package instead of five. Another advantage in strapping them together is there is only one chance of loss and damage against five if shipped separately.

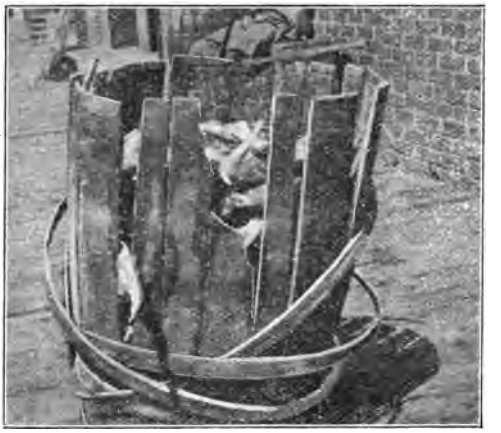
NUMBER THIRTY-FIVE

Numbers thirty-five and thirty-six represent what are termed fibre packages, which are now being increasingly used by shippers of cereal food, crackers and similiar articles put up in individual packages.

My records show they are better packages than the cheap wooden cracker box. The chief objection to them is they can not be repaired. The photographs show the weak points are the joints and seams. If these can be strengthened, and carriers would demand each package should be roped or wired for additional protection, they would make a very acceptable case to contain goods enclosed in individual wrappers.

Numbers thirty-seven, thirty [illegible] of cheap or indifferently put [illegible]

Number thirty-seven is four boxes out of sixty in one shipment of fruit jars. There were over sixty jars broken, an average of more than one to a box. The boxes are on a parity with the smoked herring boxes.



NUMBER THIRTY-EIGHT

Number thirty-eight is the remains of a barrel of fish on reaching destination. The barrel had at last fallen to pieces, being worn out from constant use.

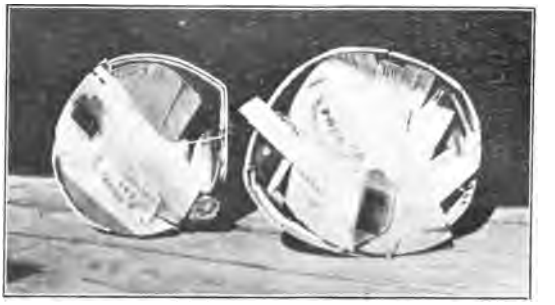
NUMBER THIRTY-NINE

Number thirty-nine is a box of meat. Now, the genius who devised this box nails the boards forming the sides to the four pieces I have marked A, B, C and D, and then nails the boards forming the ends on the inside of these four pieces. So when a box is stood on end and another package of any weight is placed on top of it, the pressure forces the boards down, drawing out the nails, and the box is in bad order, hard to repair, and contents subject to damage or robbery.

If the smoked herring package and the fruit jar packages are about the limit, numbers forty, forty-one and forty two show one which is the limit.

NUMBER FORTY

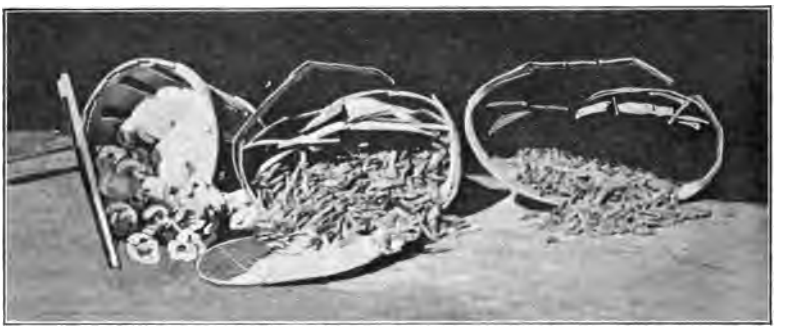
Number forty is an end view of a car half-way to destination. Numbers forty-one and forty-two are nearer views of individual packages.



NUMBER FORTY-ONE

Beans, peas, cucumbers, squash and other kinds of vegetables, and also fruits are shipped in this package, and the yearly loss to carriers must

be enormous, as the shape of the package prohibits it being stowed with any great degree of safety. Shippers and consignees would be saved the worry and trouble of many claims if they would discard this package.



NUMBER FORTY-TWO

Number forty-three is a very good illustration of the value of strapping a case. Note the one on the right, which is strapped, has reached destination in as good shape as when it started. Contrast it with the two

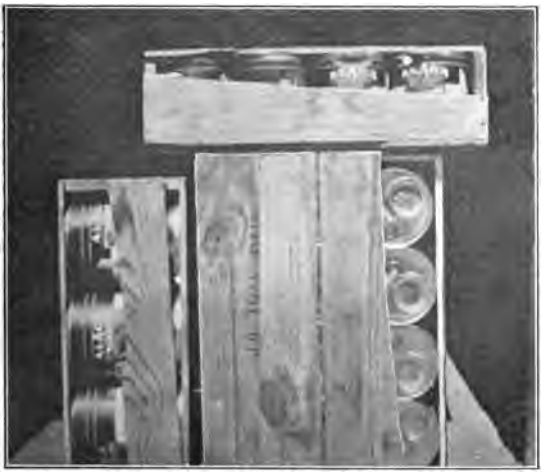
NUMBER FORTY-THREE

unstrapped cases. How easy it would be for an evil disposed party to help himself to the contents of the other two. Or, if the tops were not open, how easy to pry off a board and nail it back in as apparent good order as ever.

Number forty-four is a case over five feet high containing hats. Note the crack between two of the boards. The wood is so thin that it is possible to spring the boards wide enough apart to run your hand in and pull out as many hats as you want. This case should have been strapped around each end and also strapped around the middle. All boxes four feet long and over should have an additional strap or metal clamp for about every two feet.

NUMBER FORTY-FOUR

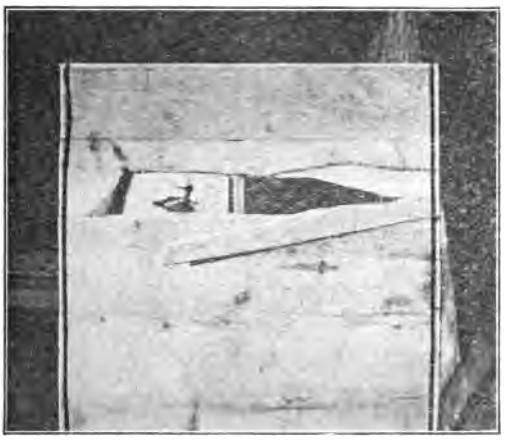
Number forty-five shows three boxes of syrup. If they had been strapped the thin boards constituting part of the tops would not have been lost. The absent board of the case to the left contained the shipping marks. Fortunately it was found and the agent was able to forward it to proper destination. This is an additional argument in favor of strapping.



NUMBER FORTY-FIVE

Number forty-six shows a box which is properly strapped, yet has been broken

into owing to the thin and poor quality of the lumber used in its construction; which proves a box should not only be strapped, but the lumber used should be of a thickness and quality commensurate with the character of its contents.



NUMBER FORTY-SIX

I cannot too emphatically advocate that carriers should refuse to accept a wooden box, case or crate unless it is made of lumber of sufficient strength to safely protect the contents, and bound by straps, preferably of metal, according to its size and weight.

If this is done it will mean a tremendous reduction in claims for losses from packages and damaged goods.

The addition of metal straps will also be a great protection against robbery and petty pilfering now being done owing to the ease with which a package can be opened.

In concluding an article which could be continued almost indefinitely with photographs of other classes of freight, I wish to say I have been impressed with the apparent indifference of the average shipper as to the fate of his products after they are sold.

The ordinary manufacturer or jobber seems willing to spend any reasonable sum to sell his wares, either through the expense of traveling salesmen or attractive catalogues, etc., etc.; yet when the goods are sold he must lose all interest in them, for how else can you account for his packing and marking them for shipment in the condition shown in these photographs.

Possibly he works on the theory that if carriers are silly enough to accept them under these conditions, and will pay for any loss or damage, it does not matter to him. That is where he is mistaken; for it does matter to him, and very vitally. As I previously stated, a pleased customer is a very valuable asset to a seller, and a pleased customer is the man who gets his goods promptly and in good order, and he is buying more and more from the seller who takes every precaution to insure this.

That is why long-headed shippers are returning to the old way of properly marking and packing their goods, and are buying stencilling machines and stencilling cases on a clear, clean surface, as shown in number two.